

Skeena Region

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT

March 2003



**for Lowe Inlet Marine
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

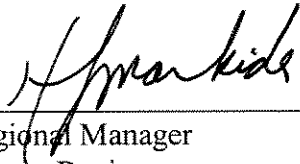
**Ministry of Water, Land
and Air Protection
Environmental Stewardship
Division**

Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park Approvals Page

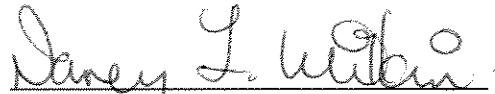
Forward

This management direction statement for Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park provides management direction for 5-7 years or until revised. Ongoing consultation between the Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may require changes to this management direction statement.

Approvals:



Regional Manager
Skeena Region
Environmental Stewardship Division



Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park

Management Direction Statement

Introduction

Purpose of the Management Direction Statement

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, direction statements from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of all these strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. In addition, all development associated with these strategies within the protected area is subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

Context

The provincial government established Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park as a Class A Provincial Park on June 14, 1993 by Order-in-Council 794/93 under the authority of the *Park Act*. The *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* provided legislated status to the park boundaries on June 12, 2000. Low Inlet is located on the east side of Grenville Channel 20 kilometres south of Klewnuggit Inlet Marine Provincial Park, 118 kilometres south of Prince Rupert and 20 kilometres north of Union Passage. (See Figure 1). The park covers 555 hectares of upland and 212 hectares of foreshore for a total area of 767 hectares. Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park is within the asserted traditional territory of the Tsimshian First Nation.

Low Inlet is a favourite anchorage of many boaters cruising British Columbia's famous Inside Passage. Grenville Channel, where the park is located, is rated by many recreation studies as the most scenic part of the Inside Passage. The Inside Passage is an internationally significant protected inshore scenic corridor of British Columbia's spectacular coast and is used by many yachts and a growing cruise ship industry.

Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park is one of a group of marine parks along the Inside Passage and British Columbia's spectacular coast. The Inside Passage marine parks extend from Hakai Conservation Study Area (122,998 hectares) south of Bella Coola, north to Prince Rupert and include the following marine parks: 1) Oliver Cove Marine Provincial Park (74 hectares) on Don Peninsula; 2) Jackson Narrows Marine Provincial Park (71 hectares) on the southeast corner of Roderick Island; 3) Green Inlet Marine Provincial Park (36.5 hectares) on the north side of Green Inlet's terminus; 4) Union Passage Marine Provincial Park (1373 hectares), 98 kilometres southwest of Kitimat and 138 kilometres south of Prince Rupert; 5) Low Inlet Marine Provincial Park (767 hectares), 118 kilometres south of Prince Rupert; and, 6) Klewnuggit Inlet Marine Provincial Park (1,733 hectares). See Figure 1 for the regional distribution of the marine parks. Other protected areas on the north and central coast that complement existing protected areas are recommended in the approved Kalum Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and in the ongoing Central Coast LRMP. Further sites will be identified through the North Coast LRMP now underway.

Marine Provincial Park Attributes

Conservation

- Conserves a small portion of the moderately represented Hecate Lowlands Ecoregion. Currently 4% of this ecoregion is included in the protected areas system within 13 protected areas.
- Protects approximately 340 hectares of the CWHvh2 Coastal Western Hemlock very wet Hypermaritime subzone, Central variant). This variant is well represented in the protected areas system (9.96%).
- Protects approximately 210 hectares of the MHwh1 (Mountain Hemlock wet hypermaritime subzone Windward variant). This variant is moderately represented in the protected areas system (5.18%).
- Conserves 212 hectares of the poorly represented North Coast Fjords Marine Ecoregion. Currently 3.11% of this ecoregion is included in the protected areas system.
- Protects a regionally significant scenic anchorage from development.
- Protects a holding area for salmon attempting to pass Verney Falls to enter Kumowdah River.
- Protects marine areas of medium importance for waterfowl and of some importance for shorebirds and alcids such as marbled murrelets.
- Protects marine areas of high importance for harbour porpoises, and of medium importance for killer whales, Pacific white-sided dolphins and Dall's porpoises, and of some importance for humpback whales; harbour seals and Northern (Steller) sea lions are also present.
- Protects a small area of grizzly bear habitat with suitability rated as low.

Recreation and Tourism

- Contains a popular and safe all-weather anchorage appropriate for overnight and longer-term stays for boaters along the Inside Passage.
- Protects the scenic seven metre high Verney Falls at the head of the inlet where the Kumowdah River enters Nettle Basin.
- Contains some walking opportunities beside the waterfall at the head of the inlet though users must travel through Indian Reserve (I.R.) #3.
- Provides kayaking, small boating, camping, fishing and scenic viewing opportunities.

Cultural Heritage

- Protects two archaeological sites within this park, including a stone fish trap near Verney Falls.
- Contains the remains of a fish cannery that operated from 1890 to 1934.

Commercial Business Opportunities

- Provides potential commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation and education boat tour groups based on the special features of this park. This type of business is best developed as part of a systems approach where several provincial parks, protected areas and Crown land areas along the Inside Passage are included to give clients a diverse and interesting program.
- Provides limited commercial business opportunities for guided angling and hunting. Any business proposals for these consumptive opportunities must be reviewed under the Parks

[Click here for Figure 1: Regional Context Map - 1,850 kb pdf](#)

and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy to ensure their compatibility with park management objectives. (See Appendix 1 for activities allowed in this park).

Significance in the Protected Areas System

- Conserves various sensitive aquatic habitats including estuaries and the lower reaches of coastal streams.
- Protects intertidal zones composed of unconsolidated material and of low slope, eel grass and kelp beds and nursery habitat for crustaceans and fishes.
- Protects a popular and scenic anchorage along the Inside Passage, an internationally significant scenic travel corridor.
- Contributes to a provincially significant system of marine parks along British Columbia's coast that provides small boaters with reliable anchorages.
- Protects a portion of the viewscape from Lowe Inlet anchorage.

Land Uses, Tenures and Interests

Access

As Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park is located along the Inside Passage access is by boat or float plane. The park is located 118 kilometres south of Prince Rupert and 20 kilometres from Klewnuggit Marine Provincial Park to the north, and 20 kilometres from Union Passage Marine Provincial Park to the south.

Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans have a staff cabin under Park Use Permit.
- One Park Use Permit authorizes use of the park for commercial tourism anchorage purposes.
- Trapline 0611T028; the trapline currently is not authorized by a Park Use Permit.
- Commercial fisher operations harvest Dungeness crabs at a low intensity level.

Adjacent Patterns of Land Use

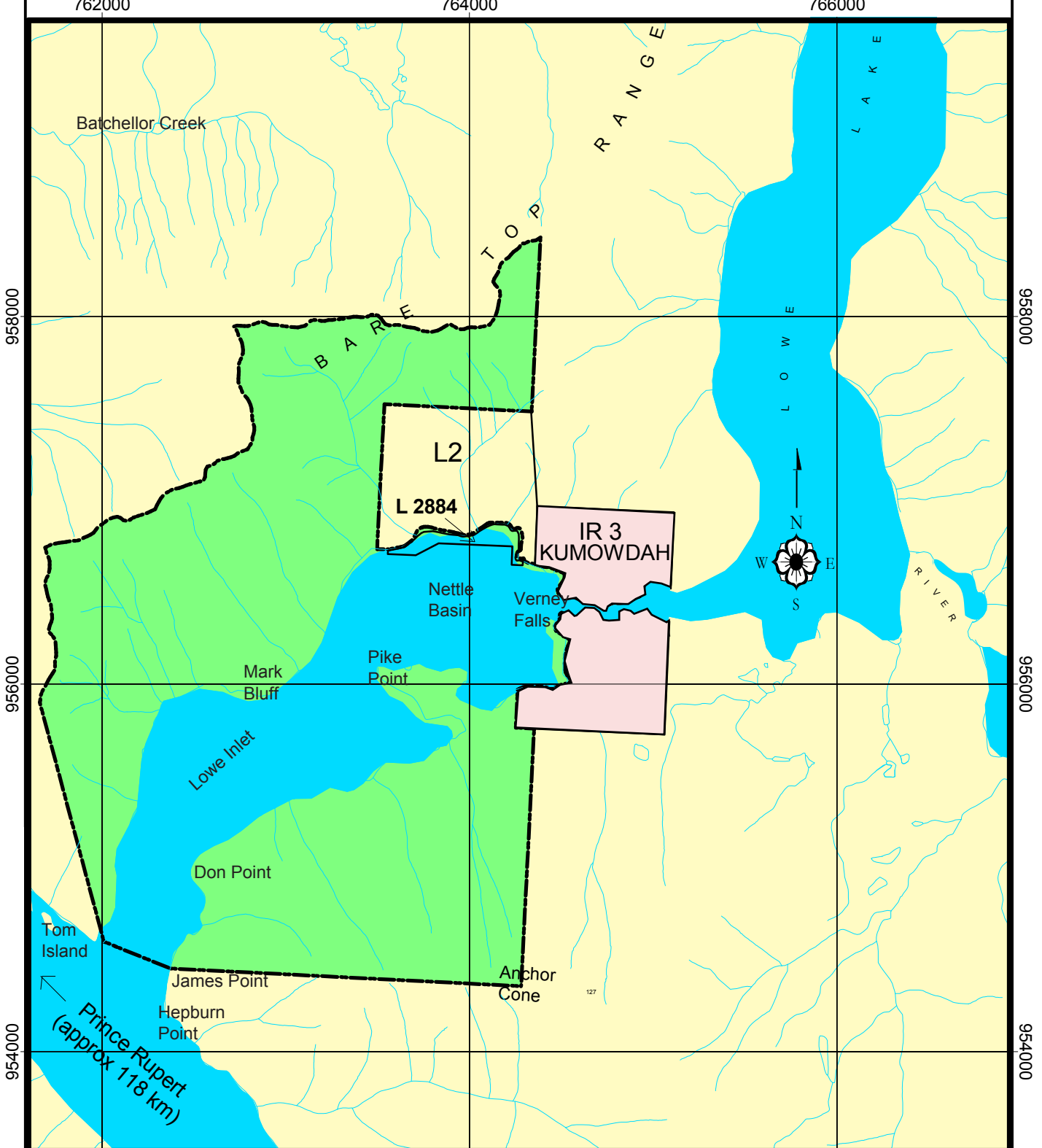
- The park is adjacent to I.R. #3 Kumowdaa and District Lot L2.
- Logging has occurred on private land adjacent to the park (Lot 2).
- Commercial fisher operations harvest sea cucumbers at an intense level in Grenville Channel.

First Nations Interests

- Lowe Inlet is within the asserted traditional territory of the Kitkatla and Gitga'at (Hartley Bay) bands. Both bands are affiliated with the Tsimshian Tribal Council. The Tsimshian Tribal Council supported park establishment if the following interests could be accommodated:
 - that establishment be non-prejudicial to existing or future land claims;
 - that all traditional Tsimshian rights be maintained;
 - that the presence of anchor buoys is acceptable;
 - that there be no land-based developments at this time; and,
 - that any land-based developments should require permission from the appropriate Hereditary Chief(s)

Figure 2: Tenures and Land Use

Low Inlet Marine Park



762000 764000 766000

958000 956000 954000

Scale 1:30000

200 0 200 Meters

	Minor Roads		Low Inlet Park Boundary		Indian Reserve
	Major Roads		Cadastral Data/Tenures		Protected Areas

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- I.R. #3 Kumowdaa is adjacent to the park and many users visiting the falls gain access through this reserve. Further discussions regarding access through the reserve are required between the Environmental Stewardship Division and local First Nations and the Department of Indian Affairs.
- Local First Nations have expressed an interest in the harvest of salmon within Lowe Inlet. They have also indicated their interest in maintaining an “Excess to Salmon Spawning Requirement” (ESSR) harvest in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Other Agency Interests

- The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the management of the marine waters within the park and in the salmon runs that pass through the park going up Verney Falls to Kumowdah River.
- The Biodiversity Branch and Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection have a management interest in the freshwater fish species living in Kumowdah River and streams within the park.
- The Biodiversity Branch and Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and the Canadian Wildlife Service have an interest in the seabird concentration on the southeast side of Lowe Inlet within the Nettle Basin estuarine complex.
- The Archaeological Planning and Assessment, Registries Department, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management has an interest in the archaeological values in the park under the auspices of the *Heritage Conservation Act*.
- Lies within the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection Wildlife Management Unit 6-11 and Department of Fisheries and Oceans statistical area - sub area 5-24.

Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Council of B.C. Yacht Clubs has an interest in the park because of its safe and scenic anchorage.
- Northern British Columbia Tourism Association has an interest in the park because of its value to the tourism industry and the boating public.
- Sea Kayaking Association of British Columbia has an interest in the park as a major destination for kayak users.
- Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District is interested in the park because of its tourism benefits.
- Residents of the north and central coast look to this park as an important boating and outdoor recreation destination.
- Commercial seafood harvesters are interested in Lowe Inlet as a source of fish and other seafood.

Marine Provincial Park Role Statement

Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park’s primary role focuses on conserving aquatic habitats associated with the Grenville Pass portion of the North Coast Fjords Marine Ecoregion. To this end, Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park is among several marine parks and protected areas along the Inside Passage (e.g. Union Passage, Klewnuggit Inlet and Green Inlet parks are others nearby), that contribute to a system of protected estuarine, intertidal and marine environments. The park also serves a secondary

conservation role of protecting upland forest areas and a number of significant archaeological sites. Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park fulfills a secondary but highly significant role of protecting a scenic, safe anchorage for small boaters navigating the Inside Passage of British Columbia’s coast. In addition, the park provides opportunities for outdoor recreation activities such as kayaking, hiking, wilderness camping and wildlife viewing.

Management Commitments and Issues

Management Direction from Previous Planning

A fisheries information summary and management strategy for the park has indicated that Verney Falls has been evaluated as a possible fishway location to assist fish passage over the falls, and that this project might damage the unique characteristics of the area. The recommended action was for BC Parks (now the Environmental Stewardship Division) to formally request notification and consultation by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans if this project is activated.

Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Protecting the park’s ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park’s flora and fauna are relatively unknown because inventory of these values is incomplete, especially those of the Nettle Basin estuary. • The park’s ecological integrity may be at risk because of land use activities, such as forest harvesting, on lands next to the park. • The park’s ecological values may be at risk because of a lack of coordination between federal and provincial agencies and within provincial agencies in sharing resource information and in permitting potential incompatible resource use activities (e.g. timing of commercial fisheries). • Spawning salmon gathering at the base of Verney Falls are vulnerable to over fishing because of easy access by fishers. • The park’s coastal location places intertidal and shoreline areas and wildlife dependent on these habitats at risk because of potential pollution from an oil spill.
Protecting recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park’s viewscape may be threatened from forest harvesting outside the park. • Informal park trails are not designated or maintained and traverse through I.R. #3.
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public visiting the park may be at risk because of the presence of bears, particularly when spawning salmon gather below Verney Falls.
Protecting cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage sites may be at risk because no complete inventory exists of these values.
Protecting First Nations Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park visitors are gaining access to Verney Falls through I.R. #3 and a formal mechanism to allow access does not exist. • An interest has been expressed in continuing to conduct an “Excess to Salmon Spawning Requirements” fishery within the inlet
Park Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public often does not know the park exists because of a lack of proper signs and park information.

Management Direction

Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
To protect the park's ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an inventory of flora and fauna with priority focused on Nettle Basin estuary. • Work with other agencies such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) (fisheries issues), the Biodiversity Branch and Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (wildlife and fisheries issues), Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (archaeology issues) and Ministry of Forests (forestry issues) to ensure co-ordination between management agencies and that management activities do not affect the ecological integrity of the park. • Implement, in cooperation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, periodic enforcement patrols to ensure sport fishers comply with sport fishing regulations that prohibit angling for all finfish 100 metres seaward from the mouth of Kumowdah River. Highlight this provision within park brochures. • Ensure Environmental Stewardship Division staff (regional in particular) are aware of their role in the BC Marine Oil Spill Response Plan and the sensitivity ratings of the park's coastline in the Coastal Resources and Oil Spill Response Atlas when the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management completes this mapping for the North Coast.
To protect the park's recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the visual integrity and scenic quality of forested lands next to the park scheduled for harvesting are considered through appropriate land use planning processes and consultation with the Ministry of Forests. • Conduct an assessment of trails leading to and beyond Verney Falls and consult with local First Nations and other stakeholders to determine if the trail should be upgraded and designated as a formal trail. The potential for human and bear conflict should be addressed as part of the trail assessment. Formal questions about legal access should also be resolved - see strategy on protecting First Nations values. • Evaluate the need for a mooring buoy that will serve to reduce environmental damage to aquatic life and water quality and allow safe boat anchoring.
To ensure the park is safe for public use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any electronic and paper brochures prepared for this park highlight information on bear awareness and the dangers of Verney Falls.
To protect the park's cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and collect information on cultural heritage values.
To protect First Nations values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the Tsimshian First Nation as issues require. • Discuss with local First Nations and Department of Indian Affairs access through I.R. #3 and depending on discussions take steps to accommodate, mitigate or eliminate recreational use of the Indian Reserve. • Work with DFO and local First Nations to assist the ESSR fishery and reduce any associated impacts.
To provide information to park visitors and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform park visitors of the area's park status by placing appropriate signs in the park. • Update the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection official website with current information about the park. • Develop an Environmental Stewardship Division electronic and paper brochure highlighting the British Columbia marine provincial park system for the Inside Passage.

Consultation and Future Planning

The Environmental Stewardship Division will continue to consult with Tsimshian First Nations regarding management of this park. Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with Ministry of Forests regarding possible viewscape issues relating to forest harvesting. The priority for preparing a full management plan for Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park is ranked as low. This management direction statement will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, in five to seven years time.

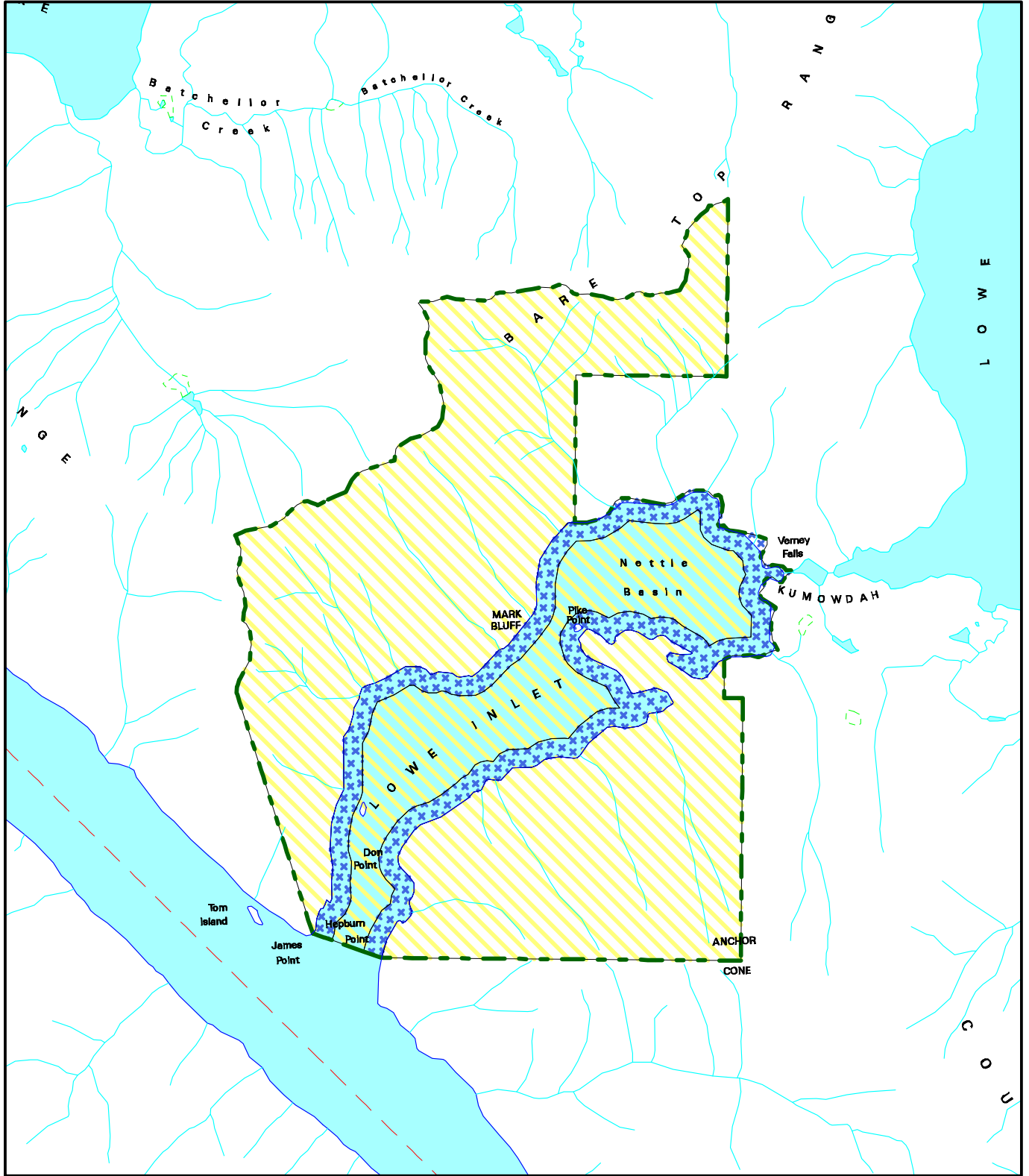
Zoning Plan

The park's land above the ocean's natural boundary is defined as Natural Environment Zone with an emphasis on protecting the park's natural and outdoor recreation values, including the viewscape from the anchorage. A portion of the park's foreshore is placed within a Natural Environment Zone recognizing the variety of boats (motor to human propelled) that use this anchorage. The Natural Environment Zone covers 555 hectares of upland and approximately 130 hectares of foreshore.

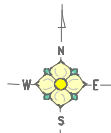
Special Feature Zone applies to an area extending 100 metres out from Lowe Inlet's natural boundary inside the park. This zone ensures protection of estuarine and intertidal environments in the park through the application of more stringent regulations and policies. The Special Feature Zone includes approximately 92 hectares of foreshore. (See Figure 3 for distribution of the zones).

Figure 3: Zoning

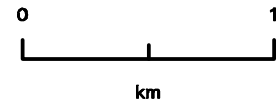
Low Inlet Marine Park



Projection: UTM Zone 9
Datum: NAD83



-  Natural Environment
-  Special Feature
-  Protected Area Boundary



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This is a visual representation
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legal purposes.

**Appendix 1. Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park
Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities.**

Activity/Use/Facility	Acceptability
Aboriginal traditional uses	Y
Hunting	Y
Fishing	Y
Trapping	Y
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	N
Utility corridors	N
Communication Sites	N
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	N
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	Y
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	Y
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	Y
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	N/A
Cat-Assisted Skiing	N/A
Ski Hills	N/A
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	M
Backcountry Huts	M
Water Control Structures	N
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	N
Road Access	N
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	N
Off-road Access (motorized)	N
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	N
Motorized Water Access	Y
Aircraft Access	Y
Fire Management (suppression)	Y
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	M
Fire Management (prevention)	M
Forest Insect/Disease Control	N1
Noxious Weed Control	N1
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	N1
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	M
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	M

Y= allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan
M= may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives
N/A= not applicable

N= not allowed
N1= allowed for expressed management purposes only
N2= present and allowed to continue but not normally allowed